

Prabuddha Bharata

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GLIMPSES

WHOSOEVER looks for anything elsewhere than in the Self, is abandoned by every thing.

—*Brihadâraṇyakopaniṣad.*

IN ternum æternum. The Eternal is within us.

—*St. Augustine.*

RELIGIOUS consciousness partakes of the Infinite, towards which it is constantly yearning.

—*Oliver Wendell Holmes.*

EVERY one, whether he is abstemious or self-indulgent is searching after the same Friend: every place may be an abode of love, whether it be a mosque or a synagogue.

—*Hafiz.*

THERE are many ways of climbing a mountain, but all who reach the summit, are sure to look upon the same moon.

—*Myriad leaves. (Japanese poetry.)*

HE to whom all things are one, and who reduceth all to one, and seeth all things in one, may be steadfast in his heart, and abide in peace with God.

—*Thomas A Kempis.*

HE who descends into the depths of his own spirit and dwells there in silence and humility, will hear a voice that is not his own.

—*Maurice Maeterlinck.*

HE only is advanced in life whose heart is getting softer, whose blood warmer, whose brain quicker, whose spirit is entering into living peace.

—*Ruskin.*

RELIGION consists in doing the least possible evil, and the greatest possible good—in mercy, charity, truth, and purity of life.

—*Edict of Asoka the Great.*

THE Siddhârtha taught that the real defilement consists in 'evil thoughts, murders, thefts, lies, fraud, the study of worthless writings, adultery,—such are *âmagandha*, and not the eating of flesh.'—*Amagandha Sutta* in *Sutta Nipata*, translated by Sir M. Coomara Swami, p. 67.

LITTLE self-denials, little honesties, little passing words of sympathy, little nameless acts of kindness, little silent victories over favourite temptations—these are the silent threads of gold, which, when woven together, gleam out so brightly in the pattern of life which God approves.

—*Dean Farrar.*

It is told the Rishi Lomash did not care to build even a grass shed to live in,—as he said life was so short! He did not think it worth the trouble. What an insight this tradition gives us to the mode of thought of our forefathers!

SRI RAMAKRISHNA'S TEACHINGS

THE NATURE OF THE WORLDLY-MINDED

THE worldly-minded never come to their senses, even if they suffer immensely and get terrible experiences. The camels like the thorny shrubs very much; the more they eat them, the more their mouths bleed, but they do not refrain from eating them.

SOMETIMES their condition is like that of a snake which has caught a mole; it cannot swallow it nor throw it out. They may know that there is nothing real in this world—like the *Amrha* fruit, only skin and stone and no kernel to speak of—yet they cannot leave it and fix their mind on God.

THEY have another peculiarity. If they are removed from worldly associations and brought under spiritual influence among the good and the holy, they will never be at rest but will pine away in anxiety. The worms which breed and prosper in filth will die if you put them in a clean and fresh-cooked pot of rice.

THE world-bound soul like the filth-worm lives and dies in the filth of worldliness without any idea of the filthiness of the world. The worldly soul is like the fly that sits now on filth and again on the sweet, while the free soul is like the bee that always drinks honey and nothing else.

WHEN a certain quantity of pure milk is mixed with double the quantity of water, it takes a long time and labour to thicken it to the consistency of *kshira* (condensed milk). The mind of the worldly man is largely

diluted with the filthy water of evil and impure thoughts and it requires a long time and labour before anything can be done to purify and give the proper consistency to it.

Is it possible to drive nails into a stone? Should you make an attempt to do so, the chances are that the nails would sooner have their heads broken than make any impression on the stone.

THE crocodile will in vain be struck with the sword or the spear.

THE mendicant's calabash bowl (*Kaman-dalu*) may have been to the four *dhamas* (the four chief places of pilgrimage which a *sadhu*—a holy man—is required to visit) and may still remain bitter in taste as ever.

As the fly sits now on one unclean sore of the human body, and again on an offering dedicated to the gods, so the mind of the worldly man is at one time deeply engaged in religious topics and at the next moment loses itself in the pleasure of wealth and lust.

WORLDLY persons perform many pious and charitable acts with the hope of worldly rewards, but when misfortune, sorrow and poverty approach them, their piety and charity forsake them. They are like the parrot that repeat the divine name 'Râdhâ-Krishna' 'Râdhâ-Krishna,' the livelong day, but cries 'kaw, kaw' when caught by a cat forgetting the divine name.

THEREFORE I say unto you, to such men lecturing on religious subjects shall prove useless. They are sure to remain as worldly as ever in spite of all these lectures.

SKETCH OF THE LIFE OF NAG MAHASHAYA

PRINCES throwing away their kingdoms and turning into monks, men of superior capacities and accomplishments embracing the lives of beggars, a handful of men rushing upon millions to die fighting rather than give up their swords, hundreds of women cheerfully walking into huge flames of fire rather than be polluted by the unholy touch of tyrants—this is India. The effacement of the man-self for the God-self has ever been the key-note of the highest life here. Even to this day, every now and again, the startling, electrifying image of a life makes its appearance from its hiding place among the unknown, ~~generally when~~ too late, when the sacrifice has ~~been complete~~, when the name only is left and the form dissolved.

Such a life is before us this moment—a life which by the fire of its intense religious fervor, its absolute freedom from the touch of self, its complete mastery over the flesh, its habitual indifference to things that pertain to the world, yet living in it all its days, and above all its deep absorption in God, has kindled in many a strong desire for the knowledge of the Most High and roused many a slumbering soul to a remarkable spiritual activity.

Durgacharan Nag, for that is the name of the subject of this brief notice, was born in Deobhog, a village in Naraingunge, Dacca, on 6th *Bhadra*, 1253 (Bengali) and died on the 13th *Poush* of the present year (1306) at the age of 53. He was the only child of his parents. After learning what the village teacher could teach him, Durgacharan was sent to a day-school, ten miles off, at Dacca, which distance he walked twice every day. While yet a boy, humility and obedience

formed, as it were, the backbone of his character. On one occasion his father lost his temper and ordered him to go out of his house; poor Durgacharan thought it his duty to carry out his father's behest and immediately slipped away from home. When his father heard this, he called back the simple child, admired his devotion and regretted having been so hard upon him.

A deep sympathy for the suffering, which finally developed into a perfect type of universal love manifested itself strongly even at this early age. One wintry morning he was seen sitting in the sun without any clothes on. On his father enquiring where he left his shawl he quietly replied: "I have given it to a poor man who was shivering with cold."

He was married very early, but his child wife did not survive the marriage long. After a few years of study at Dacca his father brought him to Calcutta and gave him English education. Durgacharan devoted himself to studying Homœopathy and very soon earned distinction. It was not medical skill alone that contributed to his fame. The moral virtues that showed themselves so brightly in his dealings with the patients had a great deal to do with it. The patients, on being cured, would gladly give him the amount of money justly due as his fees. But Durgacharan would only take what he just required for his bare living and returned to them the rest. Thus the patients could not help feeling an infinite amount of gratefulness to their saintly doctor.

He was married again, when thirty-one, by the pressure of his father, but only in name, like his Master Sri Ramakrishna. "He has

passed his days carrying on his bosom a burning flame all the time, but never could the flame burn him. He has got through this terrible trial!"—is the testimony of his wife.

After a few years of practice as a Homœopath, he came into contact with Sri Ramakrishna. Like the touch of a burning flame with a mighty explosive it at once brought out the hidden fire of spirituality from within the depths of his heart which began to shine forth from that time with a peculiar lustre.

The first act which dazzled and electrified a good many of his friends and neighbours was the giving up of his profession. Shortly after his first visit to Sri Ramakrishna he heard from the Master's lips that the medical and legal professions were not conducive to spirituality, and he at once threw away his medicine chest into the Ganges. That hour did his professional career end, and that hour did he consecrate himself solely to the service of God. For days and nights he would sit absorbed in deep meditation in a small hut on the bank of the Ganges in Calcutta without touching a morsel of food to satisfy the natural demands of his body. Many a time did the God-intoxicated man run out of the hut and plunge himself into the Ganges to quench the burning flame of his spiritual thirst. It was God and God alone that swallowed up his

mind completely. For nought else he could take any thought. Even the thought of his much loved father could not now find any place in his agitated breast. That father would sometimes try to dissuade him from his strange devotion and urge him to take up his profession again. But the one answer which he invariably gave to this, was: "The Blessed Guru Deva will give us what we want." One day when his father was very much vexed with financial difficulties he heard his boy say that the Blessed Guru Deva would provide for them. This exasperated the old man very much, and he thundered out that the dead frog, that was lying near was what his Guru Deva had sent him to eat.

Durgacharan, who, like a second Nachiketa, was incapable of the thought that his father could utter a word that was not meant, immediately took up the dead frog from the ground and ate it with the greatest indifference.

What might be regarded as his strong faith in the providence of Sri Guru Deva brought about the fulfilment of his words very soon. The merchant of his village whom his father had served for many years with true fidelity, was moved to a loving admiration for Durgacharan and allowed a pension to his family. The question of money which might have interfered with his spiritual culture was thus happily solved and Durgacharan was left quite free to go the way he loved.

(To be continued.)

UNITY AND CONSISTENCY IN THE VIEWS OF THE VEDIC PHILOSOPHICAL SYSTEMS

THE apparent divergence of views obtaining in the Indian philosophical systems sometimes lead even educated men to apprehend that they are contradictory and antagonistic to

each other and that if some of them are right, the others must be wrong.

These critics, incapable from a lack of right understanding, to grasp the deep and recondite philosophic thoughts of

our ancient venerable sages, rashly rush forward to criticise them only after a superficial study of their books. In reality there is nothing like contradiction in them. They are rather complementary to each other.

Broadly speaking these systems fall under three heads. (1) Karma-Mimamsa (2) Brahma-Mimamsa and (3) Bhakti-Mimamsa. They all lead to the final Beatitude (Moksha) through Action, Knowledge and Devotion respectively.

The Karma-Mimamsa works out the salvation of man by means of actions untinged with the sordidness of desire for reward. It lays down that a man by means of actions gradually reaches a stage when he is capable of performing wholly unselfish acts, thus finally obtaining the Summum Bonum. Unselfish acts lead to the dissolution of the individuality and all that enchains the soul to the world of misery; and the aspirant is, therefore, able to ultimately attain Salvation after an enjoyment of the fruits of his past actions. Similarly the Vedanta proceeds to demonstrate that by means of the increase of Spiritual Knowledge, the veil of Avidya (Nescience) is torn asunder, and the aspirant is thus able, after the annihilation of the cause of his ignorance, to realise the knowledge of the Self and through it, obtain Absolute Liberation.

The Bhakti-Mimamsa holds that an all-absorbing devotion to the Lord makes a man indifferent to all except Him. By the instrumentality of such an unceasing and unchanging Love to the Lord, the aspirant attains the Highest.

Just as the views of several persons,

—one holding that the heart alone is the principal nourishing organ of the body, the second, that it is only the digesting organ which sustains the life, while the third asserting that the mouth alone is the paramount organ in that respect,—are correct from their respective points of view; so are the views of these three philosophical systems true from different standpoints. They appear mutually contradictory when looked at from one standpoint only. Just as the food being carried through these three members nourishes the system, though their functions are different, so the man on the way to Salvation, will have undoubtedly to pass through these three paths.

The food that is eaten, entering the mouth, reaches the stomach and being turned into blood, circulates throughout the body by the action of the heart, and thus nourishes the system; even so the man destined for Liberation, being first quite unselfish in his actions, destroys his egotism, reaches the region of the Intellect and being purified in understanding, begins to catch glimpses of the Divine Self and then being absorbed in ecstatic devotion to Him, reaches the glorious Realms of Immortality.

These three paths, though having in view the same goal are indubitably different. It must be borne in mind that the conditions brought on by them are in reality so interwoven and interdependent that a man passing through the one, will, at the same time, be able to go beyond them all and attain the Supreme Felicity.

Moksha (Liberation) is the ultimate

goal of all these three paths. It is optional to a man whether he adopts the one or the other. He may reach this Summum Bonum by destroying his egoism by means of pure and unselfish actions and consequently gaining Bhakti and Jnana, or by first attaining Jnana which eliminates his individuality and induces Bhakti as its result, or by gaining Bhakti *persaltum* by the grace of God and overstepping the stages of action and knowledge. One may try as he pleases; the result is the same.

This may be stated in another way. The result of unselfish acts is the purification of the Ego; that of knowledge the realization of the refulgent glory of the Supreme Being; and that of *para-bhakti* the attainment of the highest state of Bliss and Beatitude.

There are several other points of such apparent difference in the Vedic Shastras; for instance, the difference between the Dualistic and the Monistic theories; the difference between the Sankhya doctrine of the manifold Purusha and that of the advanced monism of the Vedanta,—difference between the Yogic theory of self-exertion and the Vedantic belief in three kinds of actions. These are only apparent differences and capable of reconciliation by a deep study of the Shastras by a man of impartial understanding.

If we view the Soul from the standpoint of the liberated—one perfected, undefiled and unbound—the Advaitic theory is valid, but if from the point of view of a worldly man—one limited in knowledge and intelligence and labouring under bondage,—the truths of the Dualistic and the Sankhya doctrines

are irresistible. Similarly when we take into account the extraordinary psychic powers of the Yoga,—a thing recognized by all the other Systems—Bhakti, Mimamsa, Vedanta and the Sankhya, we cannot but accept only two kinds of actions, the visible and the potential; but when they are not a point of our consideration, the parviscent and parvipotent soul is surely subject to the three kinds of acts,—the past, the present and the potential as set forth by the Vedanta. In this way the more one studies the profound and subtle philosophy of our venerable sages, the more consistent and universal he will find it. The reason of the difference between the systems which deal with empirical and transcendental knowledge, respectively, is to be sought for in the difference of standpoints *i. e.* empiricism and transcendentalism, from which they view things.

The empirical systems, such as the Nyaya and others look to the objects of empirical knowledge for the attainment of their object, while the Sankhya and the Vedanta which concern themselves with the transcendental knowledge aim at subtle and metaphysical truths; hence the difference that we find in the views of these systems.

(To be continued)

A SADHU MEMBER
OF THE NIGAMAGAM MANDALI

The followers of the different Scriptures: Veda, Sankhya, Yoga, Pashupat, Vaishnava &c., each claim their own faith as the highest and truest, but like unto the ocean in regard to streams, Thou art, Oh Lord! the ONE DESTINATION of all, though they might follow different ways—straight or crooked—according to their different tastes.—*Pushpadanta*.

PROBLEM UNIVERSAL

(Concluded)

THE question arises. Is it not Pantheism what we have been preaching? I find a gentleman has remarked in a letter to the Indian Mirror that I have been preaching Pantheism. Well, I ask him, what if it is so, if it gives me a real solution of the universe, makes us feel God nearer and in and through all and everything? What, if it is Pantheism, if by it I feel the existence of God nearer than by the so-called Theism or any other Ism? There are different stages of Pantheism. There is one stage of Pantheism which is nothing else but materialism. It teaches that God has changed into this material universe and everything that we find here is a part of God and there is no other God except this manifested universe. This is not the Pantheism of the Vedanta. The Vedanta wants man to become identified with the Infinite Love or God and make him forget his little self entirely. Is this Pantheism? The materialistic Pantheism is not at all a suitable name for the religion of the Vedanta; you might express it better by the word Hypertheism or Supertheism or something higher than Theism. The God of the so-called Theism is outside this world. Vedanta leads us a step higher and proclaims the immanency of God in and through all this creation and process of evolution and so we might better term it Hypertheism, Supertheism or Monism. If any Western philosopher says certain truths borrowing them from our own Vedanta we are very glad to accept them, but we will not have them if they come to us direct from our own Scriptures! Let us not cast truth away because it has been labelled with the bad name of

Pantheism, but let us be humble votaries at the shrine of Truth, wherever it may be found, be it in the Vedas, or in the Bible, of the Christians, or in the brilliant researches of Modern Science.

Of the four questions we have seen the answers of the two 'Whence and How.' The other two remains—'What and Why.' What is this universe for? And the answer comes clear: To take each and every one to the highest point of evolution—that is the end of the universe. To evolve life and consciousness even in the lowest particle and take it to the highest, the superconscious existence where man will find no more barriers to his knowledge—barriers which his material body and mind are constantly manufacturing—that is the end of the universe. But why has the Creator projected this universe out of Himself? Necessity He has none, or if He has any, would it not mean a certain imperfection in Him? Nobody can answer this "Why." But this question too involves a fallacy. Man has been asking this 'Why' from times immemorial. In old times when his power of thought was immature he had to satisfy himself by bringing out those crude theories of creation which are to be found in the mythologies of the world. Later on, when his power grew he put the same question thus: How has the conditioned come from the unconditional;—or how has the unlimited become the limited? We have been forgetting over and over again that in order to find the answer to this we shall have to go beyond and transcend all relativity; because you will find it in the Absolute and nowhere else. Vedanta explains this question from two positions.

The one is the standpoint of relativity and the other that of the Absolute Entity or the standpoint of God Himself. From the standpoint of relativity there might be a necessity of Teleology, but from the standpoint of God, the answer is that there is no universe in our sense of the word; and why? Because God finds Himself to be all these things and knows that He is yourself, myself and everybody else's self, but knows them not as separate entities. He knows that He is manifesting and playing Himself alone and there is none else separate from Him and therefore He cannot be said to be conscious of creation as a separate thing from Himself. Thus arises the doctrine of the Vivartavada of the Vedanta, which later on misunderstood and misinterpreted, gave birth to the crude illusory theory of the universe, as we find it in the translations of our Scriptures by Western scholars. The truth is, the Vedanta tries to give no explanation from the Absolute standpoint except that the

world is a spontaneous outflow of the Deity, a play of love of the Infinite with Himself.

From the relative point of view there is every necessity of creation as we have seen before, and this relativity will remain true so long as there is this relative vision. The necessity of creation from the human standpoint is to lead man higher and higher till at length he brings out all the powers that are hidden within him and which all of us are going to do some day or other. Let me now conclude with a prayer from the Vedas :—

“May our mind and speech act in harmony with that Highest Truth. Do Thou, Oh Self-effulgent Light, reveal Thyself to us! May the senses bring and retain day and night the higher light which has been revealed through the Scriptures! I shall speak what I know to be true and may that truth protect and perfect him who speaks as well as him who hears,—Peace, Peace, Peace!”

SARADANANDA.

OUR LIFE A TRIAL.

FEW men seem to understand that what we call life is at best but a trial. It is an attempt to adjust ourselves, our inner world with the outer. The distractions of the sense-perceptions produce a disturbance of our mental balance, our mental harmony, and what we call Life is nothing more or less than an endeavour—a silent and perpetual endeavour—to restore that balance and harmony.

If this truth were borne in mind, there would have been far less grief and vexation of spirit in the world. The young aspirant after the Ideal finds himself at the outset face to face with the Actual. He finds that living in the world, such as it is at present constituted, up to his Ideal, is no easy matter. What is, conflicts, according to his preconceived notions, with what *ought to be*. The Ideal and the Real are at war in the world.

If the aspirant be wise, he will

see that this disparity between the two sides of our nature; call it by whatever name you will, is the true secret of our zest for existence. If life were a finished product, predestined and its possibilities defined beforehand, there would have been no progress in the world. There would have been, in that case, nothing higher to aim at and aspire for. Such a theory is essentially wrong.

One lesson more the student of Life will take to heart. It is this: he can make this trial itself, his Ideal. Seeing that the life of the gods is an intangible Eden, a wandering in the mirage-waste, he will find that the search after this unknown dream-land is never, but always to be, fulfilled. Let him work constantly and unweariedly and with his aim always fixed at the Ideal. This will make him a useful member of the human family and will every day bring him nearer to that supreme beatitude—human life made divine.

PALLIVIL KRISHNA MENON.

CHICAGO NOTES

II

IN domestic life, too, there is a readiness to turn to, and make the individual task lighter by sharing it,—a tendency to consider work as fun.

In the elementary schools, where the great mass of American children are educated, one sees the same beauty of architecture and ornament as in the homes of the rich,—photographs of great pictures and beautiful buildings, and casts of the wonderful sculptures of ancient Greece. The wealthy go to Europe to buy these things and their houses are adorned with them, but the same choice objects are considered perfectly appropriate to the education of the poorest; and teachers contrive ways and means of bringing them in reach.

I have never seen a more charmingly-planned home in my life than that just round the corner here, where working-women board at low rates, on the co-operative scale. In England such homes exist, many of them, but the attractiveness of the reception rooms in this, would there be considered appropriate only to the highest classes. Does this not speak of a respect and equality which is quite real? However rigorously certain persons may exclude certain others from their social intercourse, it would never occur to them, nevertheless, that they might assume their desire for a lower standard of comfort or refinement.

But here, perhaps, we come upon the most potent of all factors in the Americanising force—the frank enjoyment of life. This is a civilisation in which every man is struggling to succeed, many have a chance of succeeding, and where all who do so

know that their possession of the highest spiritual and intellectual gifts will be held as proved by that fact! The result is a childlike frankness of materialism. “How *can* India have all this ‘Truth’”, one man asked me quite seriously, “when the Plague comes there?” That a man may sometimes hold aloof from choosing a profession, out of a sincere desire to devote himself to larger ends, is another of the ideas which would be held as axioms in older countries, but are difficult for the American mind to grasp.

Work and succeed, succeed and enjoy! Something of this sort is the unspoken motto of life here. And new feet are quickly drawn to join in the mad race for wealth, luxury and pleasure.

Yet in her women America has reached a height which all the culture and religion of other countries has not enabled them to reach. I have been here only a few months, yet already I have met, in my own personal circle, four of the women whom a whole continent might be proud to have produced.

One of them is the mistress of this house—and this is a Social Settlement. Let me describe it first. Hull House must once have been the home of a wealthy merchant, comfort and beauty have both been considered in the building of the oldest part of it: to-day it stands in the heart of Chicago slums, and this old dwelling is now only the central feature of a mass of buildings which include a lecture-hall, a gymnasium, a workshop, a concert-room, a school, and a host of other things. There is a nursery, too, where mothers going out to a day's work may leave their babies, and near by is the

home for working-women of which I spoke before, while last but not least is an excellent coffee-house, or restaurant, where good and well-cooked food may be had at the lowest prices, most attractively served. And all the clubs and classes and manifold activities that are housed under the roof are served by some twenty men and women who make their home in the central building. I am a guest here just now, and never in my life have I dreamt of anything quite like this. To begin with, there are innumerable calls at the front door. Any one who is at hand is expected to fulfil any request that he can, and I have been proud, when occasion offered, to act as *durwan*. But it was little use. For I had no idea of what to do with the people I admitted. One—poor woman!—wanted food, and some one came presently and sent her to the house-keeper. Another needed hospital-assistance, and it took a doctor's clear head to unravel his perplexity. Someone else required the personal advice of a particular resident at once on his family-affairs. The next case consisted of four or five persons who arrived close upon each other's heels, to be shown round: and so on and so forth. And I was *durwan* only ten or fifteen minutes!

Then in the evening, there are so many classes and clubs and lectures and concerts going on at the same time, in different parts of the house, that one can never be sure of seeing anyone person once in the course of a whole day except at meals. The ceaseless, tireless activity of it is more like a kaleidoscope than anything else. And yet at the head of it all sits a woman with quiet grey eyes, who never seems disturbed! She is, if anyone ever was, an embodiment of that "Wise one amongst men, the Yogi and the doer of all action, who sees *inaction in the midst of action*." Ten years ago her passion for the People called this house

together, conceived the idea, and gave a fortune to the expression of it. To-day, other fortunes have followed hers, it has grown and developed: a small army of workers make its ideals their own; she is leader of almost every section of the foreign population round her; and apparently it has never occurred to her that the secret of the whole thing lies in her personality! She is quiet, clear-headed, and most unassuming. She writes well and lectures well, yet there is never a stray paper on her writing-desk; she is the head of the house, yet none ever hears the tone of irritation or authority; above all, she is a good woman who keeps herself surrounded by good people, without becoming the victim of any person or clique, or the mistress of any community or individual. One asked her of the motive of work such as this,—“to bring the benefits of civilisation and other good things to those who might otherwise have been unable to share them,”—she answered quietly.

How I wish we in India could get our scheme of model *bustees* started, and could have a Hull House in every model *bustee*!

For the benefit of men we should not need an actual house—a large open hall with well-projecting eaves and the regular old Indian gymnastics free to all,—morning and evening. Outside, the well-kept grass and the blossoming fruit-trees, surrounded by decent well-built homes of the simplest kind.

And then, for the women, a Hull House of a quiet kind, pleasant rooms, and books and pictures—*Indian*, every one of them,—and simple gymnastics, and a manual training school! One's heart beats fast at the prospect and the assurance rises that it shall be realised,—the day shall come when material difficulties shall cease to be all-important and we Indian men and women for the Indian people, shall be allowed to start

a scheme such as this. When it comes, would it not be a worthy thought to name our first women's home after this American woman,—my first friend here amongst

strangers in the Indian Cause,—Jane Addams?

NIVEDITA.

NIGAMAGAM MANDALI

THAT the many-visaged, long-asleep giant, popularly known as Hinduism, is awaking in right earnest, can no longer escape the eyes of even the least observant among us. The one great evidence of this fact, among many others, is, that the rough outposts and embankments which were hastily put up to meet, and neutralise the conditions brought on by the first impact with Western Culture, are now, having faithfully served their day, fast crumbling away; thus unmistakably showing, that they are no more wanted, because the Central Seat of Power is no longer dominant. Already the work of assimilation has begun, for what form of belief, that is, of sustenance, could be outside Dharma? The Sanskrit word 'Dharma', which it has been the fashion to translate by the word 'Religion,' means 'that which holds or sustains'. That which holds each particle or individual *in its place*, on its onward course in the current of Evolution, is Dharma,—the Law of Being. How could then, any motive power be opposed to Dharma, if it is not *unnatural*? Far less could systems and agencies which serve to uplift and carry a particle or individual nearer towards the goal, be antagonistic to it. The real name of the body of

teachings found in the Veda and Vedanta, is *Dharma*: none other. All the other names applied to it are of recent origin, forced and imperfect.

Such being the case, no form of spiritual sustenance (belief or religion), could be outside Dharma or which means the same thing, Vedanta,—the end of all knowledge. Hence we find, at the present day, that in proportion as the blessed spirit of these ancient and immortal teachings is being realised and made part of their daily lives, by Indians, a perfect harmony of understanding is beginning to manifest itself. There are three modes of Spiritual sustenance (religion), the dual, the qualified monistic, and the non-dual. Do not all the forms of religion, viewed in this light, seem at once to fall under, to be included in and inseparable from Vedanta? In the same manner, the embodiments of the Atman, Christ and Mahammad and all other Avatars known and unknown, are at once seen to take their places by the side of Krishna and Buddha, as so many more Ishta-devatas, so many more forceful manifestations of the Infinite Atman for the upkeep of Dharma.

A product of this harmonious under-

standing*—a genuine child of the times, is the Nigamagam Mandali, an Association brought into existence by Sannyasins in one of the Kumbha-Melas (pilgrimage meetings) at Allahabad, with the object, among others, of putting an end, by showing the right view-point, to all intersectional difference among the followers of the Veda and Vedanta. Already harmonical commentaries in popular Hindi of some of the systems of Vedic Philosophy have been published, and a Hindi journal issuing every two months, containing much valuable matter conceived in this harmonious spirit, is now in its fourth year of publication. Some other important treatises on Yoga and cognate subjects have been issued and many more are ready for the press.

The other objects of the Mandali, are : (1) To bring about a conference of Sannyasins and Grihastas in the pilgrimage seasons, when they would assemble at particular spots of their own accord, to

*Vide, for a sample of this, the article contributed by the Acharya of the Mandali, "Unity and Consistency in the Views of the Vedic Philosophical Systems" published elsewhere.

discuss and determine matters of importance to both Ashramas ; (2) The reformation of religious and charitable endowments, and of temples and Maths specially ; (3) To collect and preserve Sanskrit books and Mss. by founding a large and comprehensive library (a nucleus of which has already been formed at Etawah, N. W. P.) ; (4) To found a Sanskrit University, for all India, and build Hindi into the medium for imparting instructions in, and the common language of, the whole of India.

We had the great pleasure of meeting with the moving spirit of the Mandali recently, and discussing with him its aims and objects, as well as the ways and means of accomplishing them. We need make no secret of our love for, and complete sympathy with, the objects of the Mandali. It has already accomplished much by silent and steady work, and it will be no small happiness to us to co-operate with and do what shall lie in our power for the furtherance of its aims—which, we believe are also the aims of all right-thinking men and women of India.

THE ORPHANAGE BHABDA

DURING his famine relief work, 1896-97 in the Murshidabad District, Swami Akhandananda started the orphanage and began his work with two orphans, in August, 1897. E. V. Levinge Esq., and W. Egerton Esq., the local Magistrates of the time, encouraged the Swami with their sympathy.

The present number of boys is twelve, of

which, one was sent by J. G. Cumming Esq., the Magistrate of Bhagulpur and two by J. R. Blackwood Esq., the Magistrate of Murshidabad.

The Home was first at Mahula. In the beginning of 1899, it has been removed to Shargachi, eight miles to the south of Berhampur. The boys are staying, at present, in a

house, kindly lent, free of charge, by Srimati Madhushundari Barmanji, the zamindar of the place. This noble lady has also granted, for the construction of the orphanage building, about $1\frac{1}{2}$ acre of land, at the nominal rent of Rs. 0-15-3, a year.

Besides feeding and housing the orphans, the aim of the Orphanage is to educate them in works of usefulness, mechanical, industrial, technical, and mercantile; to train them morally and spiritually, in short, make them men, in the full sense of the word.

The boys are taught weaving, sewing, carpentry, sericulture and English and Vernacular reading, writing and arithmetic. A weaver, a tailor, a carpenter and a Bengalee Pundit have been engaged for the purpose. The Pundit teaches every morning, except Sunday; the weaver, every Tuesday and Thursday; the carpenter, every Wednesday and Saturday and the tailor every Sunday morning. The sericulture teacher, deputed by the Bengal Silk Committee holds his class, every Monday and Friday. The Swami, or, a brother Sannyasin teaches English, every evening,

Orphans are welcome, of any creed, caste, or

colour, and of any religion. With the young mind, good care is taken to guide its spiritual development, in the recognized method of the religious community, to which it belongs. Of the twelve boys, two are Mahomedans.

The expenditure is, at present, met by a few monthly subscriptions and occasional donations. Its wants, to start with, are a building, estimated at about rupees ten thousand, and a maintenance fund, sufficient to meet the expenses of living and education, thus placing the work on a permanent footing.

The subscriptions and donations realised fall deplorably short of the amount needed. Such an attempt, on the part of the Swami, calls for ready and sympathetic co-operation of all generous and thoughtful men. We appeal to the readers of Prabuddha Bharata to lend their earnest consideration to the Swami's cause, make it their own, and come forward with help.

Any amount, subscription or donation however small, will be most thankfully received by Swami Akhandananda, the Orphanage, Bhabda P. O. (Murshidabad, Bengal).

SATCHIDANANDA.

CORRESPONDENCE

NEW YORK LETTER

Editor, Prabuddha Bharata.

SIR,

During December the Swami Abhedananda delivered four public lectures on Sunday afternoons, in Tuxedo Hall. It has been very gratifying to his friends and students to notice that his audiences have continued to increase in numbers, besides showing a growing interest in Vedanta. At the busy holiday season preceding Christmas, peoples' minds are so full of mundane affairs, that they are apt

to temporarily neglect the more serious matters of religion, or philosophy. Vedanta has seemed to hold its own, notwithstanding the claims of social obligations. To one who can look back some thirty or forty years, it affords food for reflection to note how much more marked the celebration of the birth of Christ has become. Our Puritan forefathers looked upon such observances as being entirely out of harmony with the severe Calvinism they professed and it marks a decided

advance in more liberal ideas, that we of today should have so far departed from their strict notions as to decorate our churches on Christmas Day, and hold special services of song and praise, besides making this day the occasion of exchanging gifts and tokens of good will.

This year the season was marked by a more widespread charity than ever before known in the history of New York. It seemed as if we were beginning to follow the Hindu idea of celebrating an event by feeding the poor and needy. The Salvation Army alone fed twentytwo thousand people, while other thousands were fed and clothed by private and public benevolence. Surely that is far better than making a grand feast for one's self and one's friends. It seems to indicate the coming of a new social ideal, one more in harmony with the teachings of Vedanta on the oneness of life and the brotherhood of man. This new ideal belongs peculiarly to the Nineteenth Century, at least as far as the Occident is concerned, and it is beginning to be voiced all over Europe, as well as in America. And it is this very ideal of unity, especially in religious matters, that Sri Ramakrishna strove to impress upon the minds of those who heard him. May the new century we shall so soon enter upon, witness a widespread realization of this grand social ideal! Certainly the gradually spreading influence of Vedanta here in New York must be a powerful auxiliary in that direction. Of the lectures given so far by Swami Abhedananda this season, four have been printed, and others will soon be brought out in pamphlet form, thus carrying the message

of Vedanta to many who are beyond the reach of the spoken words, besides serving to fix them in the minds of those who heard the lectures delivered. The more informal talks and classes at the new headquarters of the Vedanta Society are well attended, and the Children's Class on Saturday afternoons is a great success. Last week, on the 23rd December, a Christmas celebration and festival was held, and proved a most delightful occasion. The rooms of the Society were very prettily decorated with evergreens and flowers, the pictures of Jesus and of the Swamis being wreathed with holly, the bright red berries giving a gleam of color amid its dark green leaves. Still more delightful to the children was the gay Christmas tree, with its lighted candles, brilliant colored balls and festoons of shining tinsel, that gleamed like silver in the glow of the candles. There were suitable gifts for the little ones, besides candy and fruits. The children themselves contributed to the entertainment by giving recitations, and one boy read two stories of his own composition, working out a moral in true Hindu fashion. Besides the efforts of the children, their elders helped to make the occasion enjoyable by solos on the zither, the piano, the violin, by songs and by stories told in rhyme.

On Christmas Eve the older students assembled in the pleasant rooms at headquarters to also observe the festival of the birth of Jesus. The Swami read to us and answered questions and then led us in meditation on the life and teachings of the Christian Saviour. The New York Herald of 25th December gave an account of these exercises, and expressed surprise

that the representative of an ancient Hindu faith—could be in sympathy with a Christian festival. In fact, the reporter was quite unable to grasp the situation, though he did his best to understand it. The wide toleration of Vedanta, nay more, its cordial inclusion of all varieties of religious belief, through its recognition of the unity of the principles underlying all religions, is as yet but dimly apprehended by those who are ruled by the more exclusive tenets of Christianity. The lectures and classes ended for this year on the 24th Dec., and there will be an intermission for a fortnight, after which the Swami will resume work on Sunday afternoon, 7th Jan., 1900. With the new year Vedanta will enter upon

its seventh year of work in New York. The progress of the movement has been most satisfactory to its friends and supporters, and we all feel encouraged to anticipate a great future in America for this grand philosophy. By the presence of Swami Vivekananda on the Pacific Coast, Vedanta is being proclaimed to our brethren of the extreme West, as with recovered health and strength Swamiji has been able to resume lecturing and teaching. It is a delight to all his friends that he has so nearly regained his former vigor. We of the West, wish our brothers and sisters of the East a very Happy New Year.

Yours &c.,
A NEW YORK FRIEND.

NĀNĀ KATHĀ

WE are very glad to learn from the Mysore Herald that the Mysore Government have sanctioned a grant of ~~Rs~~ 300 per annum for three years in aid of the publisher of the *Brahmavadin*.

A SPECIAL Announcement of the Vedanta Society, New York, brings us the welcome news of the inauguration of the Young People's Yoga Association, the first meeting of which was held Thursday evening, 8 o'clock, January 25th, 1900, in the Office and Library rooms of the Vedanta Society, 146 East 55th Street, between Lexington and Third Avenues, New York.

From the 25th of January, 1900, all class lectures on the Vedanta Philosophy, class instruction, and lessons for the practice and

application in daily life of the truths taught by the different branches of the Science of Yoga, including breathing exercises, concentration, meditation, self-control, right living, etc., will be given only to the members of the Young Peoples' Yoga Association. Practical instruction in Yoga will be given on Thursday evenings.

This new feature of development shows how Vedanta has sunk deep down into the hearts of its New York students, so that they are no longer satisfied with the intellectual freedom and peace which it brings as its first fruits, to the sincere enquirer, but want to realize and practicalize in the plane of the heart that which has been reasoned out and grasped by the head. It is a tangible proof of the excellent work, the Swami Abhedananda has been doing, of

which we hear so much from our American correspondent. India sends blessings and good wishes to her worthy son that his labours may be productive of an ever-increasing fund of good in the attainment of the highest spiritual life by a wider and wider circle of our American sisters and brothers.

WE have received the following pamphlets, being reports of lectures by the Swami Abhedananda in New York:—"Why A Hindu is a Vegetarian," March 1898; "The Scientific Basis of Religion," November 1898; "Cosmic Evolution and its Purpose," October 1899; "The Relation of Soul to God," and "The Way to the Blessed Life," November 1899. Price 10 cents each, published by the Vedanta Society, New York.

WE take the following from the *Kashipur Virasi*, a Bengali paper published in Barisal, East Bengal:—

"Sri Swami Saradananda of the Ramakrishna Mission, of which the Swami Vivekananda is the head, is now in Barisal. He delivered a lecture in English on 'Catholicity and Hinduism,' on the 6th January last, at the premises of the Brajamohon Institution; and in Bengali on 'Power and Self-control,' on the 7th, 'Bhakti and Jnana,' on the 8th, and held a conversazione on the 9th and 10th, which was a great success. We have heard the lectures of several of the beloved disciples of the revered Paramhansa one after another, and have been very happy to observe the developed spiritual understanding and the peaceful presence of the lecturers.

"That the Members of the Ramakrishna Mission will have a vast spiritual following in time, can be realized from the excellent way of their teaching."

THE following is culled from a private letter:—Swami Ramakrishnananda has accomplished a good deal of appreciable work in Madras. His love for his students is unbounded. The Swami has scarcely any leisure. Almost every

day he holds classes either in the morning or in the night or at both times. It is high time that he should take a few months rest, for we in Madras desire that his work may be continued as long as possible. The Swami cares not a jot for his health.

The birthday anniversary comes off next Friday. Arrangements have already been made for celebrating it with great pomp and dignity. The wealthy people of the City are freely contributing to the fund. This year we expect to feed more than 5000 poor and blessed be those souls who give in the name of Ramakrishna Paramhansa. I shall write to you more particularly after the event. One thing has struck my notice and that is the growing influence of the sage, whose cause we are interesting ourselves in.

THE latest report from the Kishengurh Orphanage shows the number of its inmates to be 85. The Swami Kalyanananda acknowledges with thanks receipt of the following contributions:—

	R.	A.
Through the Math, Belur, Calcutta	429	12
Editor <i>Bharati</i> ..	86	0
The Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati ...	300	0
Babu Madhusudan Ghose, Dinajpur	25	0
„ Hari Das Chatterjee, Bhowanipur, Calcutta ...	5	0
„ Ramnath Ratnu, Chandpura, Rajputana ...	2	0
„ B. Bose, Baidyanath, Deoghur	10	0
„ Gosto Behari Ghose, Arrah	2	0
„ Chitta Sakha Sanyal, Jamalpur, Mymensingh ...	10	0
Srimati Virajmohini Devi, Bhagalpur	6	0
A Brahmacharin, Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati ...	6	0
A Friend, Jamalpur, Mymensingh	10	0
TOTAL Rs. ...	891	12

THE Sixtyseventh Birthday Anniversary of Bhagavan Sri Sri Ramakrishna Deva was celebrated on Sunday the 11th March, 1900, at the Math, Belur, (Calcutta); Triplicane, (Madras); The Orphanage, Kishengurh (Rajputana); and the Vedanta Society, New York (U. S. A.). We hope to publish the details of the celebration in the different centres in our next.